

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 705

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to recognize pornography as a public health hazard leading to a broad spectrum of individual and public health impacts and societal harms.

WHEREAS, pornography is creating a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, pornography perpetuates a sexually toxic environment; and

WHEREAS, efforts to prevent pornography exposure and addiction, educate individuals and families concerning its harms, and develop recovery programs must be addressed systemically in ways that hold broader influences accountable; and

WHEREAS, pornography is contributing to the hypersexualization of teens, and even prepubescent children, in our society; and

WHEREAS, due to advances in technology and the universal availability of the Internet, young children are exposed to what used to be referred to as "hard core," but is now considered mainstream, pornography at an alarming rate; and

WHEREAS, the average age of exposure to pornography is now eleven to twelve years of age; and

WHEREAS, this early exposure is leading to low self-esteem and body image disorders, an increase in problematic sexual activity at younger ages, and an increased desire among adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior; and

WHEREAS, exposure to pornography often serves as children's and youths' sex education and shapes their sexual templates; and

WHEREAS, because pornography treats women as objects and commodities for the viewer's use, it teaches girls they are to be used and teaches boys to be users; and

WHEREAS, pornography normalizes violence and abuse of women and children; and

WHEREAS, pornography treats women and children as objects and often depicts rape and abuse as if they are harmless; and

WHEREAS, pornography equates violence toward women and children with sex and pain with pleasure, which increases the demand for sex trafficking, prostitution, child sexual abuse images, and child pornography; and

WHEREAS, potential detrimental effects on pornography's users can impact brain development and functioning, contribute to emotional and medical illnesses, shape deviant sexual arousal, and lead to difficulty in forming or maintaining intimate relationships, as well as problematic or harmful sexual behaviors and addictions; and

WHEREAS, recent research indicates that pornography is potentially biologically addictive, which means the user requires more novelty, often in the form of more shocking material, in order to be satisfied; and

WHEREAS, this biological addiction leads to increasing themes of risky sexual behaviors, extreme degradation, violence, and child sexual abuse images and child pornography; and

WHEREAS, pornography use is linked to lessening desire in young men to marry, dissatisfaction in marriage, and infidelity; and

WHEREAS, this link demonstrates that pornography has a detrimental effect on the family unit; and

WHEREAS, overcoming pornography's harms is beyond the capability of the afflicted individual to address alone; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we recognize that pornography is a public health hazard leading to a broad spectrum of individual and public health impacts and societal harms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recognize the need for education, prevention, research, and policy change at the community and societal level, in order to address the pornography epidemic that is harming the people of our State and Nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.